

577-616, 675-727), Miller [1974: 31-741, Boll f1980: 87-94], Dorpalen [1988: 284-90, an overview of studies of the former Don)

8.4. *Burgfrieden* and its repercussions: Feldm-n f1966: 27-40], Blänsdod f1979], Boll [1980: 95-117], Igkt [1981], Xzuse [1994].

8.5. Genesis and development of the 1914': H. Liibbe f1963: 'spirit dd 173-238], G. L. /dosse [1964/1991. 163-248], Schallenberger f1964: 51-162], Bleuel (1968: 72-93], Böhme [1975], Koester [1977], Vom Bruch [1982], J. Sckmidt (1988, H. 180-93,) the *Fiih-rer-Ideologies in the Wilhelmine era*).

Chapter Nine IN THE TEMPLE

9.1 M war as socialism

By September the war had buried itself in the trenches, exactly what, previously, the General Staff had considered a disaster Germany. The rhetoric of defending hearth and culture no longer held up in the face of the costs in men and material of an unforeseen gigantic war of attrition. It was necessary to assign a positive value to the conflict in itself, to show above all to the millions of workers mobilized at the front and at home that it corresponded to their innermost aspirations for change in society.

The so-called 'ideas of 1914' provided it: born in fact not nd '14, bensl a year later, when the war had changed vol- to. Counting the term was the Hegelian philosopher Johann Plenge in his 'war lectures' at the University of Miinster.

It said there that the concentration, imposed by the war, "of all economic and state energies into a new whole" was precisely the "new socialism," of genuine German make: and indeed the only true socialism because 'Germany has been in the realm of ideas the most convinced bearer of all socialist dreams, and in the realm of reality the strongest builder of the maximally organized political economy' [Plenge 1915: 187-88]. In a book dd '16 Plenge then, from the very title, contrasted "1789 and 1914, symbolic years in the history of the political spirit," explaining how the 'socialist' spirit dd '14 was responsible for the victory over the individualist and capitalist-plutocratic ideas of 1789. The "Te- desque revolution dd 1914, a revolution that nd 20th century edifice and ren- weld all state forces against the destructive li-

berty of the 18th century" [Plenge 1916: 15], should be placed "dentro the ascendant line socialism" (ibid.: 84).

In disdain for 89 Plenge found himself in good company, e.g., that of Sombart for whom the ideas of 1789 were "mere mercantile ideals," good precisely for peoples of "merchants" like the English, but totally unsuitable for founding 'heroic idealism' inherent instead in the Germans (Sombart 1915:113]. In Plenge's national socialism, however, there was something more, namely the idea of organization. "Basic socialist consciousness is synonymous with the consciousness of organization," "organization is socialism" (Plenge 1916: 121, 18). It was a recipe for beguiling workers who well knew that they always had organization as the most important instrument of their struggles.

Extrapolated from the historical context of the labor movement, the concept of organization now served as a generic container that could be filled with any empirical content. This was noted by Friedrich Adler, one of the few serious socialist voices raised against the 'ideas of 1914':

"They teach us a new *ideu metaphysics of organization*. It is no longer an *intermediate link*, an instrument constructed by individuals for individuals, but acquires supreme value solely by virtue of its own being t...]. Organization as an end in itself thus becomes *the idea on which bureaucrats of all classes and all species agree*. (F. Adler 1916/1918: 108]

With Plenge et al. the naked and raw empiricism of war had found its philosophical sublimation. To each fact presided also an all-encompassing universal category. The *Burgfrieden* personified the Germanic community spirit. In military discipline and in the invaluable *Kriegsrohstoffabteilung* or 'Section for War Raw Materials,' established in August 1914 at the Prussian War mini-state and headed by the capable MG officers Walter Rathenau and Richard von Moellendod-s-incamava the organizational spirit synonymous with socialism. In the war of trine the exhilarating world socialist revolution that Germany was carrying out was manifesting itself. Although even in Entente countries the intervention of the state on the economy was sometimes dressed up to the working class as socialism, philosophical embellishments were a specialty of German professors.

Similar ideas circulated in social democracy as well. For the trade unions it was pragmatic 'socialism' even the *dicem*-bre 1916 law on auxiliary service, imposed on all able-bodied men by the seventeen to sixty years old not enlisted nell the army. Legien exalted to the Reirösfog the law as an "unfolding of the full popo- lare force in the service of the nation" (in Steitz 1993: 49], achieved through the principle of workers' co-management whereby (sol art. 12 of the law) elective workers' committees in every company of more than fifty employees were to "promote good ar- mony between and employers." The committees were undoubtedly a major legal innovation, which would later serve as the basis for works council legislation in the Weimar Republic. But meanwhile, with the execution of auxiliary service de- mandated to territorial military commands, the committees co-managed a barracks regime cloaked in interclassism. So that the title of the leftist protest leaflets, "Germany, a prison to- such!" essentially hit the nail on the head; and Haase, al *Reichstag*, rightly denounced that this was a real "*ec- law*. *ceational* against workers" [in Steitz 1993: 511.

In the eyes of the left, the SPD's ideas on war as socialism represented all the more an infamous abjuration, since propagating them were people who were once also leftists like Lensch, Cunow and the journalist Haenisch, who since the summer of '15 had been propagating them with their magazine "Die Glocke," "The Bell," subsidized by the government and edited by Parvus, another former leftist. They actually said they were following an even Marcian teaching, namely that of adjusting theory to new facts. To attend to reality-sol Cunow [1915: 161-means "for every scientific doctrine of society, not only for theam Marxist one," to exclude conjecture about "possible different directions of the development dd- things," and instead to hold firm "*simply what is*, i.e.

That which arises from historically given premises and actually comes into existence, that is, it is affirmed in the course of development. What in the process of development acquires figure and life is *historically necessary*."

It was, enunciated with some pseudohege- fic philosophical ambition, the theorization of goodness of existing because it was purely existing. In fact, from the range of many facts only one was chosen, war, and elevated to a panacea, with a reductionism

equal to that with which the radical left proposed class revolution as a universal remedy. And yet with the advantage for the Lensch-Cunow-Haeoisch group that the 'war' had become a very real 'fact', and susceptible even to social- stic transvaluations, while the classist 'revolution' had remained in limbo d- the fantasies.

In short, the defect lay once again in the insufficient elaboration of the theory-fact relationship, in the reduction of multifaceted facts to the supposedly univocal dynamic of a single fact, enhanced to elements diriment of all others. From well-established experiences of a twenty-five-year period of social democratic action it certainly descended that "the meio'fo of our struggle," sol Haenisch in '14, "has become another, that of transforming the classist state from the internally" [in Sigel 1976: 38]. But it did not at all follow from this that the only unambiguous 'fact' to now be inspired by, because the only linear fulfillment of that 'method,' was the very peculiar way *in which* "the party had transposed *the Burgfrieden*: that is, by abdicating the parliamentary opposition, accepting the further emptying of the *Reichstag*, postponing the democratization of the country until who knows when, and meanwhile giving support to chauvinism and the warlike *Macht- politik*. It was, these, precisely the arguments adopted in the "Neue Zeit" by Kautsky [1915] against the 'page turner' policy, the one whereby the party slid to the right.

From the theoretical short circuit in which the group of the "Glocke" descended similar corollaries to the ideas of Plenge, with whom, incidentally, Haenisch cultivated good relations. War is "the German revolution" [Lensch 1916: IV]. It marks 'da gra- dual rise of a socialist society, i.e., a society organized fully and systematically nJ the interest of **talità collettiva, dove il lavoro è divenuto un** instance of the right both state than ethical" [ibid.: 183]. Cunow [1916], with less aphiliatus, vedevd in all this simply a *so listische* Re.alpolitiè,lon- tan from any "utopianism."

9.2. «Da Amburgo a Bagdad»

The new world map that was to result from the war was propagated lavishly by the l pantede- publishing.

sch. Julius Lehmann's book f1917J on geopolitical objectives, which had widespread circulation even in the army, reached 225,000 copies, equipped with a polychrome atlas of the annes- sions. The map had distant roots. Through the geographers Ratzel and Partsch at the turn of the century, and Kirchhoff and Hermann Wagner in the 1980s, it could be traced back to the expansionist Gernian *Mitteleuropa* charted in the mid-19th century by Georg Funke, a proponent of a 'new world road' along which 'German life' was to flow 'from the North Sea to the mouths of the Euphrates'

On the eve of the war, the outcomes of a con0ict that was thought to be short-lived also smiled on industrialists, as emerges e.g. from the memoirs of Hugenberg [1927- 209], the director of the Krupp factories; and on June 20, 1914, the newspaper "Die Post," the organ of the pan-German and heavy industry, wrote that if the Germans are denied even the smallest chance to satisfy the natu- ral and necessary urge to l expansion, "the inevitable mo- ment will come when the others will put the sword in our hand, and then woe to the vanquished!" When war broke out those tones fell on deaf ears because they would weaken the case for defense against aggression. They re-emerged when a public baffled by the hard- re of the interior was treated to flashes of progressively richer annexations that would compensate for the sacrifices. But when in December '15 the renowned bourgeois magazine "Siiddeutsche Monatshefte" declared that in compensation for sacrifices the soldiers in the trenches "expect from peace (...) 'real guarantees,' that is, *they expect terri- tories, people and possession*" (as F. Adler [1916 a/1918: 79] nd review qud fascicle), this simply made clear how much the bourgeoisie had now turned its back on its own democratic- progressive sta- gion, i.e., on the prindpes of l'89 that tas- sively forbade any and all wars of conquest.

The most extreme had been the more than 1,300 signatories to a mani- festo dd July 1915 that in tune with the 'Pan-German League' called for annexations in the west that would dom- tate ranging from the bdgi mineral deposits to the Atlantic coast, in the east a system of states aggregated to Germany, and then a great colonial empire encompassing all Central Africa and Egypt. The signatories were li- bering professionals, theologians, teachers, artists, and over three hundred university do- cents including the antiquist Wilamowitz. The more moderate intellectuals, a minority, were content to divert the

pangermanism eastward, toward Polish, Baltic, and Russian territories to be transformed into vassal states: so said a countermanifesto of theirs, signed by 141 professors, including historians Delbrück and Dove, physicists-

, ci Einstein and Planck, the sociologists and philosophers Tönnies, Troeltsch and Max Weber.

And what did the Social Democrats, those in the parliament group and the majority of the party, think about it? Meanwhile, there was no shortage of *völkisch* pollution here either, that is, the idea of the nation as a people-stirpe. There were those who in support of the thesis of defensive war appealed to the 'people' to prevent "in the east and west large parts of its *Vollrستم*," its ethnicity, from being wrested from it (Lensch 1915: 15). After all, in social-democracy there was no lack of ideas about a national lineage socialism, presented as a solidaristic people's community, essentially ethno-racial in character. They had been brought as a dowry from the *heimatbewegung*, 'the homeland movement' of exaltation of archaic-rural values, when in the years 1911-13, especially in underdeveloped areas of Saxony, some bangs of it had joined the SPD.

Ingredient *völkisch* should not be underestimated. It was an essential ideological component of the power state. Once the thesis of defensive warfare was sotted with eyes closed and given adhesion to the Burgfrieden, the SPD's ideas about the goals of war automatically shifted from defense to expansionism, resulting in a prevarication of the *Machtstaat* over the principles of 189. For David (1915 a: 24-25) the national war opened up the "possibility of extending the weapon of our economic activity in correspondence with our demographic increase." And an opusculous by Congressman Lensch on *Operaio and the German colonies*, circulated free of charge by a paragon publishing housecompeted with the Pan-German Lehmann's list in the list of publications used by the army patriotic education courses. of it was explained that the 'future of Germany as a world power [...] serve the creation of a viable colonial empire' (Lensch 1917: 51. It was to extend as far as Persia and Afghanistan in order to please capitalist and plutocratic England east of Suez, i.e., there where 'the heart of the gigantic British empire really beats': as Lensch (1918) repeated again six months before Germany's collapse. The new system, hinged on a central Europe at

German leadership, would be characterized by a new idea of internationalism, superior to that of the old, impotent and failed internationalism. There would arise so Haenisch in outlining a work program for the Reich: "the program of the party that took place in Berlin in September of 1916-new great supra-methodic economic complexes, hegemonized by a Germany whose new national cry must be "From Hamburg Baghdad!" [in Sigel 1976: 150].

Against all this, the socialist left produced, rather than argumentations, indignant accusations of 'social imperialism' and 'social colonialism' Radek spoke of (e.g. in the "Berliner Tagwacht" of April 21, 1915) of the need for clear answers in the face of the rise of a 'moving ideology of workers' imperialism." But the 'clear' answer was basically a series of insults; and the arguments, when there were any, were about demoralization of party and union leaders, on their betrayal fostered by the presence in industrial labor of a 'working-class aristocracy' that in exchange for improvements in wages and living conditions would sell out the 'proletarian' class. This dual thesis would become dogma in the 'Marxist-Leninist' literature after Lenin's codification of it in 1920 in *Left wing communism, an infantile disease of communism*.

Even in Radek's time, moralistic simplification did not undermine the real issues. In the 'social-imperialist' ideology acted underlying elements that could not be exorcised either by moralism or by simply equating the 'social-imperialists' with the 'revisionists' always hated, and the 'centrists' accused of thinking about the viability of a parliamentary democracy in the imperialist era. In the 'social-imperialist' ideology the 'so-called' lack of clear ideas about that which in modern times meant 'revolution' The revolution socialist was regarded as an epochal palingenetic turn by both the social chauvinists and the anti-reformist left from which Lensch and Haenisch after all came. Even the 'so-called' assigned to that turn the connotations of violence of veteranrevolutionaryism. Only for them the palingenesis was already in place, it was the war socialism of Germany assumed a continuity of people. Lensch - who in February '17 declared himself in favor (along with Social Democratic deputies Quessel and Cohen-Reuss) of resuming unlimited submarine warfare for-

for in a revolution all means are permissible-he will say in October at the Würzburg congress that war is precisely a revolution and as such tolerates neither "sentimental phrases" nor "*the otóca* of crocerossina" (P-Würzburg 1917- 359). And therefore, if Germany at war is revolutionary and socialist, why exclude annexations and conquests that would turn revolution into a mon-

In themselves, these positions could not even be surprising. As Eckart Kehr, the en/nol prodigy of the Weimar historiography, had to point out, socialism was conceptually finely equipped to draw a 'red imperialism'-in the sense that it was as industrial development and the industrial economy coagulated into a strong state structure social democracy "did not re-sniff the content, but only the capitalist form." and, indeed, "approved even power politics in its capitalist form, when this meant a move away from feudalism in the direction of socialism" (Kehr 1930: 338-39). It was enough to give the war revolutionary anti-feudal (because war against Russia) and even anti-capitalist (because against England) connotations, and the German Revolution ended up coinciding with beneficent socialism.

Certainly, the Juella policy did not present a face properly democratic. Neither internally, with the *Reichstag* reduced to a machine of assent, nor externally, with the violation of Belgian neutrality as the very first act of the war. But liberal-democratic legality was in any case beyond the horizon of those who condemned the principles '89 because they were bourgeois individualistic, whether they were of the radical left or a 'social chauvinist'. One of them, the journalist Heilmann, later a contributor to the 'Glocke', had not reminded Bernstein as early as September 1914 that the invasion of Belgium was absolutely justified because "the benefit of democracy is not worth the lives of 300,000 German soldiers" (in Gay 1954: 345)2

It indeed precisely on the question of democracy had then become Bernstein's break with the "Sozialistische Monatshefte" aligned on the far left. In an article in late September 1914 he had denounced the illegitimacy of a government that gags information and criticism, something that had never happened in England even in wartime. Editor Joseph Bloch rejected the article.

and Bernstein, in December, left the magazine. But very few in the party had on the German question as a problem of democracy the ideas, at least, of the vituperative revisionist. Four years later, in the events of the November 1918 revolution, it was intended to be the entire nation that had to suffer the delays here accumulated by social-democracy.

9.3. The surprises of '17

Of the deadly warmth constituted by a war that turned out to be one of aggression and attrition, and by the *Burgfrieden* that did not iron out, but according to social injustices, only a minority in the SPD realized: as seen in the recurring votes in the Reichstag for the renunciation of war credits (which grew from 1 to a dozen billion).

On December 1914 only Karl Liebknecht, of the far left, had voted against it. In March 1915, however, it aroused more than about 30 deputies (including Bernstein, Haase, and Liebknecht) left the chamber to not participate in the vote. Bernstein and Haase explained their protest in the manifesto 'L'avenir

of the moment, which, published on June 19, 1915 by the "Leipziger Volkszeitung" (and counting the newspaper a one-week ban on publication), marked the newfound friendship between Bernstein and Kautsky, who was its third signatory. On March 24 1916 Haase in a stormy session of the *Reichstag*, interrupted and silenced by the majority of his own parliamentary group, denounced the imperialistic character of the war. They expelled him from the group; but seventeen others came out of it out of solidarity, including Bernstein, and to which the name *Sozialdemokratische Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, 'Social-Democratic Working Group' (which non-parliamentarians, including Kautsky, later joined), founded on that same day an autonomous socialist parliamentary fraction, which in an appeal to party comrades emphasized that it was not a break from discipline and loyalty it had been, but a "fidelity to the principles of the party and the resolutions of its congresses and international congresses" (Bühl 1991: 183).

By 1917 to a year the break with the old social democracy of came instead of everything tangible: in January 1917 with the expulsion-

of dissidents from the SPD's territorial organizations, and between April 6 and 8 with the founding in Gotha by one hundred and forty-three delegates from the 'Working Group' and the SPD's internal opposition, and in the wake of the repercussions of the Russian revolution February of the Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (USPD), the 'Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany' Already that name proclaimed, in controversy with a full-fledged governmental SPD, that there was now at last a socialist party 'independent' of the government. Its line - set the founding document [in Bihl 1991: 266] - was precisely the "principled opposition against the dominant system of government, against the war policy of the Reich and the policy conducted in the wake of the government by the leadership of a party which of social democratic has only the name." Within a year it grew to a hundred thousand members, with parliamentarians Haase, Dittmann, and Ledebour and leading group - p. Kautsky, though reluctant to split to the last, drafted its manifesto expressing "enthusiastic homage" to the "proletarians of Russia" of the February revolution (Kautsky 1917 a)). This cost him the editorship of the 'Neue Zeit', where he was replaced by Cunow.

The new party - to distinguish itself from which the old social-democracy also called itself *Mehrheitliche Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (MSPD) or 'Majority Social Democratic Party of Germany' - was immediately joined, albeit with autonomy of positions, by the small group of revolutionary internationalists, later to become 'Spartacists': who, coagulated around the Luxemburg, Mehring, Marchlewski, Liebknecht, Thalheimer, Brandler and Clara Zetkin, had since '14 been carrying out anti-war propaganda, which they then increased with their own newsletter, the 'Spartakus' precisely.

The schism of '17 sancled simply a factual situation. As early as mid-August '14 the deputy and member of the General Trade Union Commission Robert Schmidt had declared that if the left continued to "disturb" a clean table would have to be given, and "then the small group of radical doctrinaires can set about making together with the anarcho-socialists an international doctrinaire sect of ideologues": as David [1966: 17] noted in his diary of the war years. However, at the 1913 Jena congress quid "small group" had been a good third of the party. E

in the spring of '15, after eight months of war and *Burgfrieden*, grassroots militants were not at all surprised that by now in the SPD "coexisted two distinct social democratic parties side by side": as Wilhelm Eildermann [1972: 155], then a young socialist in Bremen, reported.

To be revealed daily as a colossal mystification was especially the proclaimed national solidarity. From the beginning of '15 and then increasingly so, the contrast between the 'organized time' of the masses and the war profits of stormy industrialists and speculators brought the class struggle back to its primordial form of contrast between the poor and the rich. "The class struggle - set Rosenberg [1928/1947 90] who had direct experience of those years - "took on in Germany, in spite of the internal truce, the most terrible form imaginable, namely that of the struggle for the morsel of bread." In such a framework, where tragedies of the front and internal drama added up, it is not surprising that the German proletariat saluted the Russian revolution of February 1917 first and foremost as a promise of peace. The SPD's central committee, anxious not to lose support after the split, took the cue from this to declare on April 19 that the government in Germany should be pushed to promote negotiations for a peace without annexations.

The problem, of course, was that of instruments. In Russia both the turning point had come with the revolutionary overthrow of the autocracy and the abdication of the tsar. And in Germany? People of the old regime noted with horror - as did Loebell, minister of the interior in Prussia, on April 4 - that the "evening effect" of the Russian February was due to the fact that "all liberal demands had been fulfilled AND, all of a sudden, while here in Germany it has been for years that the democrats have been trying in vain to impose their wishes" [in Bartd 1958: 427]. But, intoxication aside, what could the German Democrats could and really wanted to do? The USPD, blocked by the ideology of the 'internal truce,' merely queued up on subaltern positions to cautious maneuverings of the liberals and the Zentrum, aimed at carving out some parliamentary space for peace. Scheidemann, the chief whip of the eighty-nine deputies remaining in the SPD after the split, had a nice saying in his memoirs that "and during the course of 1917 the war would have to be ended on any terms if Germany is to be preserved at least from complete collapse." fScheid-

mann 1928: I, 385L The fact is that the MSPD, liberals, and *Zentrum*, whatever they said in public so as not to lose support, were in fact not even touched by the idea of peace 'on any condition' Perhaps they could have prevented the country from the final disaster if they had opted for a rapid and radical parliamentarization and, above all, had been free from subservience to the military and the illusions of *fachtpolitik*. But these they continued cultivate until the late summer of '18.

Both souls of the USPD, both the parliamentarist and the spartacist, were at least immune from chauvinist infection: but they too were far from having tools to get out of the war. In information bulletin of the Berlin USPD of April 8, the parliamentarist wing declared that "we are dealing with conditions different from those in Russia, so that the battle for our internal life must take other forms," i.e. precisely par-complain forms (Bartel 1958: 429-30); but nothing was said about how these, in concrete terms, might be. In contrast, the "Spartakusbriefe" or "Spartacus Letters," which had been the underground organ of the Spartacists since '16, proclaimed in August 1917 that

'the revolutions are not made in parliaments (...), they are made only in the streets and by the work of the popular masses operate' (Bartel 1958: 4491: and therefore- similarly to what the radical left wanted in 1905 about the mass strike- one would have to follow the Russian model throughout.

If that was the mood of the Spartacists after February, one can imagine their enthusiasm in the face of the October Revolution. Certainly also- as one of their leaflets put it [in Bartel 1958: 466]- because it hastens "the end of the massacre of the peoples," but because it represents the "beginning of the realization of socialism." In the "Leipziger Volkszeitung," the traditional left-wing paper, praise of the October Revolution already implied subversion at home: "the idyllic dream of the revolution as the work of all social strata has vanished," and by now revolutionary democracy has "a tough civil war" ahead of it (Clara Zetkin, Nov. 30). Soviet October seemed an invitation to forget Engels' 1895 and return to the theses of Muri/Esso.

In reality, the 'masses,' the recipients of such appeals, did not wonder-

no matter whether the one opened in Russia was the way to socialism, well-

whether from the "peace decree" issued November 8 by Gov.

of the workers and peasants would have resulted in a general peace or, at the very least, a separate peace in the east. From the "Vorwärts" of November 9 they had learned, at the same time as the news of the Bolshevik victory, that Lenin wanted armistice and peace at once; from the background articles e.g. by Carl Severing in the "Bielefelder Volkswacht" of November and December they learned that the Leninists were "the bearers of the idea of peace." In short, except on the Spartacists' side, that was the real *diffuso* interest, not the interest in socialist power. And if one really wanted to ask whether or not the Soviet October marked the high road to socialism, there immediately Kautsky's 1917 [b] suggested to him by the Russian events: obviously true that a true socialist set-up can only arise from highly developed capitalist-industrial conditions, and therefore not in Russia; and that therefore, since that revolution could not constitute a model for Germany, the German proletariat had to beat a whole other road, that of thoroughly democratizing the *Reich*.

9.4. *Knots that won't untie*

In short: would it not have been better to think about the parliamentarization of Germany before the socialist revolution? It was an old dilemma, already present in the constitutional battles of the 1890s, then in the debates over the monarchy and the civil and penal *codice*, then again in the Prussian electoral reform movement, and finally in the 1911 instance, proposed again at the height of the war by Bernstein [1916] that the *Reichstag* should have powers of control over foreign policy.

The prospects of democratization, which had loomed with the socialist dictatorial success of 1912, had found themselves immediately placed by the *for* *e* and *initialization* of the country. They re-emerged Guglielmo II's unexpected so-called 'Easter message' (1917), which projected the abolition, at the end of the war, of the dictatorial system by classes in Prussia, because it was now anachronistic "after the immense work of the whole people in this terrible war" (in Bihl 1991: 265). But while the SPD was under the illusion that this was a parliamentary opening, the liberal-conservatives had instead understood very well its meaning: namely, that perhaps the feared mass actions against war and the old regime would be possible.

tute fortunately neutralized-so in June '17 Del- briick to von Valentini, head of Wilhelm II's cabinet for civil affairs-with "concessions to democracy," that is, by introducing in Prussia universal suffrage, which, while in itself repro- ducive, "is for us at this time an instrument of salvation" (in Stern 1959: N/2, 571-72).

The LSPD, which had set aside until after the war any po- litics for the democratization of the Reich and had been taken aback by the idea of the reopening of parliamentarization, knew how to express nothing new on the subject at the Wiirzburg congress. Scheidemann's generalities about parliament having to control government and chancellor IP-Wiirzburg 1917 410), could well have been dated to before '14. An autonomous socialist theory of the state had always been lacking. It was all the more lacking now, after the introduction of massive doses of *Burgfrieden* into the party's i- deology.

natural outcome of the 'internal truce' seemed to be part- cipation in the government. This, in minimal form, had after all already taken place in July '17, with the appointment of August Müller, a sin- dicalist and contributor to the "Sozialistische Monatshefte" and the "Glocke," to undersecretary of the Food Bureau. He, moreover, totally despised parliamentarism. He called it a bourgeois and "Manchesterist" impediment, an obstacle to that supposedly beautiful socialist transformation of the economy which in the "proletarian class interest" had already taken place with the magni- fic socialism of war; and he finally proclaimed that one had to "re- nounce either to the socialization of the economy or to the parliamentary system" [A. Müller 1917).

From such undersecretaries the government obviously had no democratization work to te- mere. And besides, the very co-opting of a socialist into the government was purely instrumental. It served to better continue the war and war economyas Ddbriick admitted with his usual frankness in a minute letter in the autumn of 1917 to the Prussian diplomat Eulenburg, a friend of Wilhelm II's: "In order to win the war, we cannot do without the help of the left, even of social democracy, which, moreover, shows itself to be well disposed to it" (in Diiring 1975: 45). The MSPD's participation in the government was thus a collusion with

avowedly anti-socialist forces, and this will have very heavy repercussions on the events of the German Revolution of '18.

In the USPD, on the other hand, the line of the 'centrists' was emerging, in contrast to the Sparta- chists, who insisted on the viability of a parliamentary path which was, however, fundamentally socialist, quite different therefore from the governmentalism of the old SPD. "We are democrats. Not only socialist, but democratic. We seek to introduce democracy into the state and society," Ledebour said on behalf of the 'centrists' at the party's founding congress (in Eichhom 1921: 52-53L But this was followed neither by theoretical elaborations of a socialist and yet democra- tico-political alternative to the classical parliamentary system, nor by technical plans for reforming the *Reich* system.

Weighed in particular was the question of whether a political and so- cial democracy was feasible in the age of imperialism. On a capitali- smo- imperialism not necessarily aggressive, thus not necessarily incompatible with political forms of democracy, there had been, it is known, certain ideas of Kautsky (see 4.3, 7.2, 8.2). Du- rantly during the war he had expanded them, beginning with the essay *L'fmpere- rialism* published in the "Neue Zeit" at the end of August '14. There he read that an *economic* necessity ài to continue the rearmament race would not be there after the war even from the point of view of the capitalist class itself, which from the conflicts between national capita- lisms would indeed have everything to lose. Hence every modern-minded ca- pitalist should rather have shouted to his fellow men, "Capitalists of all countries, unite!" and from the world war of the imperialist powers a league of nations could be born which would put an end to the arms race [Kautsky 1914 b: 920-21].

In a context "ultra-imperialism" as Kautsky defined it, of an imperialism evolving to connotations that are, that is, 'beyond' the classical ones, the proletariat will have an unprecedented double task. On the one hand - sol Kautsky in *Nation-State, Imperialist State and League of States* of 1915 - it will have to, in conjunction with those among the capitalist forces that are equally interested in it, pro-move an international system of "democracy of nations" or "League of States" based on the principle that "the status quo *will not be changed se- without the consent of the peoples involved*" (Kautsky 1915 a: 141; on the other hand, it will have to, within national spheres, co-

squeeze the capitalists to manage business "no longer by the tropically comfortable and easy methods of imperialism, bensl by those of democracy and free trade, which yes greater inventiveness but open the widest avenues to economic progress, and together strengthen the proletariat materially, spiritually and politically" [ibid.: 80].

They were, repeated a year later also in the "Neue Zeit" in the article *H imperialist war* t19161, suggestive considerations, but of inherent practical weakness. How, in fact, would the instruments of "modern democracy" evoked-i.e., "the parliament, the press, and the large party organizations that embrace the entire sphere of the state" fKautsky, 1915 a: 8] - would be- ro served concretely to get out of the bru- imperialism, meanwhile. such of the present2 And, then, with what forces it would have been possible in the Germany of 1915 to move from parliamentary- smo facade to an institutionally real democracy) Even the lectures given by &mstein [1919 al at the *Arbeiterbildungsschule* of Berlin invemo 1917-18 on the historical perspectives of di- international ritual, captivans for their clarity and encountered on democracy as a precondition for any future pa- ce, were equally lacking in operational guidance.

In fact, the importance Kautsky's remarks on de- mocracy lay elsewhere, it lay nd the democracy-socialism pair that was now becoming clearly defined for him. Commenting on the February Russian Revolution, he explained that.

Of two things the proletariat urgently needs, democracy and socialism. Of democracy, that is, the breadth freedom and political rights, so that state structure and administrative apparatus may be transformed into mere instruments of the mass of the people. And then of socialism, that is, of production - together state, communal and cooperative - for the needs of society (...1. Social production without democracy would di- vent the heaviest of chains. A democracy without socialism would leave the economic dependence of the proletariat unchanged. tKautsky 1917: 11-12]

These formulations implied that of the three goals in 1917- 18 contiguous and intertwined (peace, democratic institutions to be realized, socialism), the third goal had as its precondition the achievement of the first two. Not even in Kautsky the discourse

summit ever on practical feasibility, but at least on theoretical priorities there was a clarity that the USPD as a party lacked.

At the Gotha congress Haase had pointed the 'independents' to a primary task: "unite to lead the class struggle with vigor and strength" (in Eichhom 1921. 39L But to achieve what immediate goal2 Really socialism2 Haase had carefully kept silent, unlike the Spartacists who, especially October nisso, proclaimed that the warmongers would surrender to peace only with the outbreak, in Germany, of a Soviet-style socialist re- volution. It was, however, a word or- dence without any advantage practical politics, and this for the very simple reason that the 'masses' always evoked had not a- fected the goal of socialism. They did not have it in the great strikes of the winter of 1917-18 implemented outside the firm trade unions in the Borg- /rIeden, nor previously, in August dd '17, had there been 'so- cialism' in the mutiny of sailors at the Kiel1 naval base, which was immediately harshly suppressed. The sailors and workers demanded only an end cameficin and the democratic right of universal generalized suf- fragium.

9.5. 'After the Return, rofnto us'

In the propaganda around Bolshevik ideas, favorable or unfavorable that it was, played in the Germany of 1917-18 a specific fat- tore. That is, the contact that there was with 'Bolshevism' in the occupied territories in the east, where the army had achieved victories appropriate to the goals of continental pangermanism. In '17 the Germanfanti fraternized in the trenches with the Russians, who, thanks to the

SOW t of soldiers' were animated by a strong hope for peace, while for the eastern chessboard command it was instead a matter of take advantage of the situation to wrest as many territories pos- sible from the fledgling Soviet republic and aggregate them under various for- ments to the 'Greater Germany' project, embellishing it by pre- senting them as a liberation from the new account 'tsarism,' the Bolshevik one.

During the summer of dd '18 he also helped plunder the East the MSPD, which in solidarity with the Cercò had collaborated in the parliamentary ratification dd Treaty of Brest abstaining in the vote, men-

three 'independents' voted (in) block (against) (what)(a) (lo-) ro leaflet defined the "rape of Russia." In September, the majority deputate Keil went on behalf of the government to plead pro-Germanic and anti-Bolshevik sentiments to the social-democratic Councillors of Ukraine, now newly independent but garrisoned by 300,000 German soldiers who instead would have been invaluable on the Western Front. Alpha publicity on Bolshevism produced in 1917-18 by the MSPD must therefore be made take due the Russians there were treated largely from the perspective of German geopolitical disputes.

On the "Vorwärts" David (1917) hoped that from the armistice in the east in December 1917, a great pact of alliance with the "Russian **democracy**," which would (lead to) Germanic to rapid militant victories on all fronts. Bloss (1918), on the "Neue Zeit" of Cunow, saw in the 'moving Russian state' an aid against 'imperialism' (that of the Entente, one understands, being excluded that the Germany of war socialism could be imperialist!). The only mistake the Bolsheviks made - one read here and there in the *Neue Zeit* - is their insistence on self-determination for peoples, essendo this practicable only when capitalism has been discredited and replaced by socialism *throughout the world* (i.e., in a future that is practically unimaginable). A postponement *sine die* of autodetermination corresponded to the alarm in the MSPD that the idea of self-determination would end up investing instead here and **now** the question of Alsace-Lorraine and the whole problem of nationalities in the central empires.

The LMSPD obviously denounced the Bolsheviks as violators of democratic legality when on January 19, 1918, they (made)disbanded the elected (apparent) Constituent Assembly by the army;(but) still dealt often with the same voices (e.g., Bloss (1918a)) that in the other view, the geopolitical view, they had held out towards the revolution **sovietic** a very soft attitude until it was semibanned that it somehow facilitated the aims in the east. So that there was a suspicion that the sudden hardening on 'democracy' concealed irritation at Bolshevik resistance to the Brest Treaty.

The real theoretical discussion on Bolshevism took place in the USPD, not the MSPD. A problem of the relationship between socialism and democracy resurfaced there in terms that the labor movement had acquired.

site for some time and which at the beginning of the war had been reaffirmed when opposition socialists argued for the recovery of liberal-democratic instances, of the 'principles of 1789' Now there were new developments. With the Soviet revolution and then, particularly, with the dissolution of the Russian Constituent Assembly on January 19, 1918, an actual question, of both theoretical and practical impact, leapt to the fore: that is, what was (or could be) in concrete terms the socialists' form of democracy. The main role in the debate belonged to the pamphlet *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* written in the summer of '18 by Kautsky, or rather by the "renegade Kautsky" as Lenin branded him in October from the very title (*Proletarian revolution and the renegade Kautsky*) of his venomous critique.

With regard to the revolution in general, the issue, which had already emerged in connection with the colonial problems (see 5.2), about the historically necessary conditions for the transition to socialism came to the fore: in other words, whether the process of socio-economic development could be shortened by skipping individual stages. To Kautsky -already skeptical about the matter as much at the time of the colonial debates as later in November '17- the shortenings appeared, seeing their attempts now in place, to be a most dangerous illusion. In wanting to establish socialism by decree and to take away stages of development by decree, the Bolsheviks resemble "a pregnant woman who makes the craziest leaps in order to shorten the duration of the pregnancy that impatiently causes her to give birth immaturely. As a rule, the product of such a proceeding is a child with no prospect of vitality" (Kautsky 1918: 43).

If 'life perspectives' were summarized in socialism continued with democracy, then the Bolsheviks had bought them all with the scuttling of the Constituent Assembly. Lenin's invectives ("the renegade Bernstein looks like a puppy according to the renegade Kautsky" [Lenin 1918 a/OL, XXVIII: 246]) targeted a Kautsky who would take "from Marxism only what is acceptable to liberals, to the bourgeoisie," and neglected to ask "democracy for what classed" (ivi: 247, 254).

Actually Kautsky was not confusing the bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy, "formal equality" and "effective equality" as Lenin (ibid.: 297) reproached him. He was only attempting to formulate the question in terms less flattened on veteran Marxism, that is, introducing the theme of possible synergy

The bourgeois political form was thus not celebrated at all as the absolute culmination of a process; nor did Bemstein, the 'renegade cub,' celebrate it in those years, knowing too that 'democratic voting rights are by no means sufficient to fuse people and state' (Bemstein 1917- 591).

It was a diatribe remarkable for obstinacy in wanting to derive from Martian and Engelsian texts of 1848 or from the era of the Paris Commune tactical-strategic indications for situations entirely different, of some fifty years later. In Kautsky's opinion, at least, with advantage over Lenin, a more up-to-date source, namely Engels of 1891-95 and the theory of the revolution as the right of resistance (see 7.2). He thus reiterated that proletarian violence is legitimate only in response to violence aimed at "suppressing democracy." Criticizing the events of January 1918 in Russia, he explained that "a regime that knows it has the support of the masses will use violence only to *defend* democracy, not already to

In short, if, through a series of fortuitous circumstances, it happens to the pro- letariat to come to power as a minority, it would destroy revolution and democracy if it then governed without the majority.

In that Engels, if words have any meaning, de- mocratic republic and 'dictatorship dd proletariat' coincided; and the implications of the overall Engelsian self-criticism dd veterorivoluzio- narism (7.2) seemed to confirm this.

"proxy stage of the revolution: sol Lenin nd March '17, in the fifth of Letters 'T' /ó 'H "o) that would quickly su- perate, unhinging it, 1a 'democratic republic' 11divario tm the two interpretations encapsulates, at its core, the entire contrast between dmnocraóco (late-Gelsian, the one way) so- cyclism and bol- scevism.

what Jineka a fractious and disoriented labor movement could have adopted in Germany during and especially after the deluge of military defeat that was about to hit the country. The collapse of the bourgeois system had been an enormously important point of reference for generations of socialists.

"After the flood we come, only we" was a defiant phrase. It expressed the belief that after the dissolution of a bourgeois society that in addition to power would also lose all moral prestige, it would be only the workers who would establish the new society. The deluge so often evoked now came in the too unexpected form of a military defeat after four years of carnage. And the labor movement, with what boats would it sail into the storm?

With the ship of socialist revolution, the Spartacists would respond. It would be built by the masses of the great strikes of January 1918, and even in Germany it would be launched by the Rites, the 'Councils,' the counterparts of the Russian soviets. The strikers already been inspired by it in January, electing in Berlin a workers' council formed by the *Obleute revolutionnaires*, the 'revolutionary trustees' of the metalworkers. Certainly, the organizers of those strikes had been shoved into army discipline companies, with the stamp 'B 18', 'Berlin 1918', stamped on their papers, to see them as subversives. But they went to the front - as one of them, Richard Müller (1924, I: 110), will recount - with the specific idea of making propaganda in the army "because we need weapons and only revolution brings us salvation." A Spartacist appeal in March 1918 then incited the creation of *Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte* (AL-Räte) or 'Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, the arming of workers and the use of violence against those who did not follow the councils' directives; and a leaflet in the summer spread the Bolshevik watchword "all power to the Workers' Councils."

Behind it lay a theoretical short-circuit similar to that of 1904-1906 regarding the mass political strike (see 7.5). From individual facts interpreted according to a deduced perspective the realizability of the prospect was deduced. In reality neither the ship of revolution was launching, nor did its hypothetical commanders have a crew. The Berlin Council of 'trustees' had not been inspired by any socialist goal, it had simply organized so a strike to which the trade unions were opposed. To the exhausted by the war, only eager for it to end, it seemed out of all common sense to embark on the further adventure of 'revolutionizing the imperialist government' as the leaflets incited. And the exasperation of the workers, who had ended up in the trenches, did not even find much resonance at a time when the German offensive

of spring-summer even promised an unhoped-for rapid *Siegfrieden*, a peace achieved by victory. When the illusion was succeeded in mid-August by the unstoppable rout on the Western front, it was the things that made the 'revolution,' not the masses totally unprepared for it; but neither, equally lacking in compasses, did the two socialist parties and the extreme left-wing groups.

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Chapter Ten

THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF WEIMAR

10.1. *Una strana rivoluzione*

In11 October dd '18, the result of one of those 'revolutions from
above' that are full of perverse effects in German history, an
unexpected parliamentarization of the *Reich* fell into the lap of the
social democracy. It had been demanded by the supreme command,
for it served that a presentable costal monarchy should demand the
armistice. An imperial ordinance of Oct. 28 sancel *pcnnnto* that the
government could operate only with the confidence of the *Reichstag*
and that parliamentary ratifications were also needed on international
treaties and for resolutions on the state of war; even the Prussian
electoral reform came into port. It was what the Democrats had
unsuccessfully demanded for half a century.

Burdening the new government, headed by Prince Maximilian
of Baden and in which Scheidemann and the mayor Gustav Bauer
participated for SPD, was the fact that the parliamentarization of
Germany was the result not of a struggle fought by the *Reichs-* ing,
but of a measure taken from above, and taken for the purpose of
placing the management of the military defeat on a parliamentary
government created at the last moment. It meant diunique to be able
to put forward to public opinion the image of an unconquered army
betrayed by the treacherous rear. *This* was part of the
Dokhtosslegende, the legend of the backstabbing infected the army
by the sov- venives, put into circulation since the time of the sailors'
revolt d4 '17 and the sÖopers' revolt of '18, widely uólizized by the
dutra and then by Nazism. The truth of the German collapse was
quite different. Consi- dently summarized the Christian-inspired
amimilitarist pacifist Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster t1919: 20], forced